



MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
COMMITTEE
43rd session
Agenda item 20

MEPC 43/20
28 April 1999
Original: ENGLISH

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Environmental Awareness in Youth

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document is submitted to the Committee to raise environmental awareness in the youth of today and includes at annex the introduction to the Action Plan prepared by HELMEPA*.
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 3.
<i>Related documents:</i>	None.

1 It is clearly of paramount importance that young people be made aware of the oceans and the issues facing them. In order to ensure the successful continuation of IMO activities by generations to follow, it is essential to raise the awareness of young people to the environment in general and, in particular, the activities of IMO for the protection of the marine environment, providing opportunities to the young in encouraging them to take part in the leadership of various activities related to IMO's work.

2 Shown in the annex is the introduction to the Action Plan* established by the Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA), which was sent to the Secretariat for information. In consultation with the Chairman, it is now brought to the attention of the Committee as an example of a good initiative in raising environmental awareness in the youth of today.

Action requested of the Committee

3 The Committee may wish to note the activities of HELMEPA in the context of promotion of similar activities on a global basis and consider what action could be taken in aspects of promoting youth awareness in the oceans and activities of this Committee.

*The attachment is available in English only

ANNEX

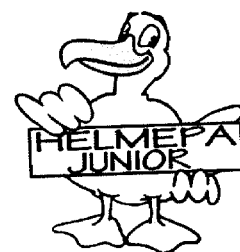
HELMEPA JUNIOR

ACTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 1998 - SEPTEMBER 1999

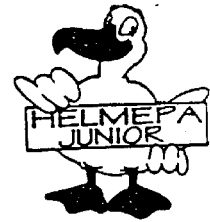


•HELMEPA•





ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΝΩΣΗ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ
ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΟΥ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΟΣ
HELLENIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT
PROTECTION ASSOCIATION



INTRODUCTION-HISTORICS

Greek Merchant Shipping holds by tradition, if not always the leading, one of the leading positions in the world merchant fleet. Its human potential, Greek seafarers and shipowners, represents the continuity of the Greek historical maritime tradition.

Technological progress, the use of many oil by-products, as well as the synthetic substances, gradually led to the phenomenon of marine pollution by human activities on and at sea.

According to the international statistical data, world shipping is responsible for 12% of marine pollution, from vessels' operations and maritime accidents. Moreover, according to the same data, various land-based sources are responsible for 44 % of marine pollution.

In 1982, Greek seafarers, through the Panhellenic Seamens' Federation, and Greek shipowners, through the Union of Greek Shipowners, con-signed their Declaration of Voluntary Commitment for the protection of the seas from ship generated pollution. This joint initiative gave birth to the HELLENIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION- HELMEPA.

The Association is a non-profit and non-governmental Organisation aiming at creating an environmental conscience within the Greek shipping community, from shipowner to the last seaman. After 16 years of operation it has proven that it indeed stands for the true unity of the human element in the important field of maritime transport.

Between 1983 and 1998 HELMEPA's membership represented a large part of the Greek merchant fleet, while in July 1998 this membership consisted of 500 vessels and 200 companies associated with shipping. These are the members that with their voluntary participation and their yearly fees and contributions finance the activities of the Organization. At the same time, over 11,700 Greek Merchant Marine Officers, shipping companies' executives as well as Officers of the Hellenic Coast Guard and the Hellenic Navy form the Individual Associate Members of HELMEPA, thus expressing the voluntary commitment of the human factor at the sea.

- ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΥ - ΠΑΙΔΙΚΗ HELMEPA -

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The people in Greek shipping, coming mainly from coastal and island areas, rightfully demanded that HELMEPA expand its environmental activities in Greece along with its efforts to protect the seas of the planet from pollution.

Accordingly, since 1983 three Environmental Exhibitions are in operation, two Permanent in the Athens-Piraeus area and one Mobile, which has visited various coastal towns. With its symbol, the "Seagull", every summer HELMEPA publishes and disseminates with the help of the Ministry of Merchant Marine and other organizations, environmental material and TV spots, which are aired gratis on national and private TV stations.

Schools of the capital, as well as of rural areas, visit HELMEPA's Exhibitions in the framework of a special program financed by HELMEPA. During their guided tours the schoolchildren, escorted by their teachers, are informed by simple means of the problem of pollution facing humanity today. A problem that man himself has created in his struggle for economic growth and prosperity, forgetting that he too, is part of nature's harmonious 'Ecological Chain', which he has finally disturbed with his actions.

A total of 170,000 schoolchildren visited HELMEPA's Exhibitions between 1983 and 1998. By filling out the same questionnaire, they have proven that the ages between 7 and 15 years are more sensitive and more receptive to environmental messages aiming at changing our behavior towards the environment.

HELMEPA, in cooperation with the European Commission and in the framework of its programs HELMEPA-MEDSPA and HELMEPA- LIFE has examined and recorded the reactions of over 40,000 children between those ages, reaching the same conclusion.

The conclusion is that the children are asking for a better environment, respect of their needs and their protests and, above all, to be given the chance to actively participate in the protection of the marine environment. They are asking for their voices to be heard because the seas and the beaches are theirs as well and they are rightfully after their protection from the pollution that elder generations cause.

HELMEPA participating in the general effort towards a cleaner environment to be inherited by the small children, decided to found "HELMEPA-JUNIOR".



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HELMEPA JUNIOR

Apart from its other activities, HELMEPA created "HELMEPA JUNIOR" in November 1993. Its first year of operation was decisive because the conclusions that were reached determined whether HELMEPA JUNIOR could continue, with the ultimate goal the children taking over the "management" of the activity.

Moreover, the children who are now between the ages of 8 and 15 and who will participate in the "management" of the activity, have the opportunity to remain Associate Members of HELMEPA as long as they like, without any financial obligation. Their only moral obligation is to support every effort towards the protection of the marine environment.

HELMEPA JUNIOR covers the whole of Greece, mainland and insular, operating in twelve geographical areas. The sixth year of its operation aims at a total of 2,500 schoolchildren from those areas aged 8 to 15, without excluding the participation of younger children or even kindergarten children.

With the support and the cooperation of the Environmental Education Directors, as well as the responsible teachers, the participation in HELMEPA JUNIOR reached a total of 12,800 schoolchildren and 500 teachers from all over Greece.

The plan of the operation of HELMEPA JUNIOR from September 1998 to September 1999 is described hereunder.

AIM

To motivate, activate and promote the voluntary participation of Greek schoolchildren, between the ages of 8 and 15, in the protection of our seas and beaches - without any financial obligation - thus to help them carry the message to society for environmental awareness on the part of all of us.